

MISSOURI HOME GUARDS.

DECEMBER 19, 1900.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. COCKRELL presented the following

**LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF THE RECORD AND PENSION OFFICE,
RELATIVE TO THE RECORDS OF THE HAWKINS TAYLOR COMMISSION,
CONCERNING THE MILITARY SERVICE RENDERED THE
UNITED STATES BY THE MISSOURI HOME GUARDS.**

RECORD AND PENSION OFFICE,
WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, December 18, 1900.

DEAR SIR: In reply to your letter without date, received this morning, in which you request to be advised what records of the Hawkins Taylor commission are on file in the War Department, and especially whether there is record of the proofs presented to the commission showing length of actual service, also whether the rolls showing the names and services gave dates of enrollment and expiration of term and the period of actual service less than the period between enrollment and expiration of service, I have the honor to advise you as follows:

As you were advised in the letter addressed to you by this office under date of December 5, 1900, relative to the case of J. P. Hopkins—The records of the proceedings of the Hawkins Taylor commission, or other retained records of the commission, are not filed in this Department, and nothing is known at this office relative to their whereabouts, if they are in existence. The registers prepared by the commission, filed in this office, contain the only known record of the commission relative to individual service.

The registers of the commission show, in the case of each man whose claim for service was adjudicated by it, the "date of organization" of the command of which he was a member and the date of his discharge, and in addition to this the period which the commission "allowed as actual military service rendered the United States." It was frequently the case that the period allowed a man by the commission as actual military service rendered the United States was considerably less than the period that elapsed between the date of organization of his command and the date of his discharge. For instance, in the case of William Walton or Yalton, Company K, First Northeast Missouri Home Guards, referred to in your letter, the register of the Hawkins Taylor commission shows June 17, 1861, as "date of organization," and October 1, 1861, as "date of discharge," but the register also

shows that the period of two months and twenty-one days was "allowed as actual military service rendered the United States." The report furnished to the Pension Office in this case was exactly in accordance with that showing of the register.

It is well known that the men whose claims were adjudicated by the Hawkins Taylor commission did not render continuous military service from the date of organization of their commands, or from the date of their enrollment therewith, until the date of their discharge, and the purpose for which the commission was created was chiefly that of ascertaining exactly how much military service was rendered by each of these men. This the commission did, and its findings as recorded in the registers of the commission are the only known source of information with regard to the actual military service of any man whose claim was adjudicated by the commission. There is an inconsiderable number of rolls of these home-guard organizations on file in the Department, but they show nothing of importance more than dates of organization or enrollment, and dates of disbandment or discharge, just as the registers of the commission show similar extreme dates, and they afford no indication as to the amount of military service actually rendered between those dates. As stated above, the commission was appointed for the purpose of ascertaining and stating the amount of such service, and the report of the commission is now the only means of determining that amount in any case.

What documentary evidence, if any, the commission had before it is unknown, but it is inferred from the report of the commission that its findings were based to a great extent upon the oral testimony of claimants or their witnesses. At any rate, no records of the proceedings of the commission are known to be in existence, and nothing is known as to the disposition made by it of any documentary evidence that may have been submitted to it.

The report of the commission will be found printed in Senate Report No. 214, Forty-eighth Congress, first session. This report embodies all the information known to this office with regard to the methods of procedure of the commission.

Very respectfully,

Hon. F. M. COCKRELL,
United States Senate.

F. C. AINSWORTH,
Chief Record and Pension Office.

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